Spiritual Wiſdom

Improved againſt

TEMPTATION:

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED

At *Stepney Septemb.* 16. 1670.
And now made publick to obviate miſrepreſentation.

By *MATTHEW MEAD.*

The Fourth Edition.

John 18. 23. *If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil; but if I have ſpoken well, why ſmiteſt thou me?*

Pſal. 120. 2. *Deliver my ſoul, O Lord from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*

Conſcia mens recti famæ mendacia reddit.

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695. a 13 (2)

To the Congregation at Stepney, *that were the Auditors of this Sermon, All Covenant-mercies be multiplied through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I Shall not put my self to the charge of importuning your acceptance of this Sermon, being perswaded that you whose ears were tyed so fast to the Preachers lips when it was delivered, will not disdain to cast your eyes upon it when it is translated from the Pulpit to the Press. Had not an unsavoury breath (that common tell-tale of a foul stomach) bowed upon it to infection, it had lain still with its elder brethren in the dark Sepulchre of Oblivion. Nor yet could that have raised it again, had not your affectionate desire rouled away the stone from the mouth of

the Sepulchre. You (it ſeems) firſt diſcovered other men digging pits in the field of my reputation, to find the unknown treaſure of their own, and therefore thought the publiſhing this Sermon the beſt way to fill them up again; which I readily aſſented to, that the World may ſee how eaſily innocence and plain dealing may be Baptized into the name of Faction and Sedition; nay that I preached Rebellion and Treaſon is charged upon this Sermon, meerly becauſe I ſpoke of *ſinful compliance with the Ceremonies againſt Conſcience*; That I mentioned not either the King or his Government, neither at that time nor at any other, ſave only to pray for him, as by the Command of God I am bound to do, I have thouſands of Witneſſes among you.

How little my Sermons have been ſtuft with State matters you can all teſtifie; *I did determine to know nothing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.*

2 Cor. 2. 1

That I have not in this Sermon ſpoken any thing *of the nature of tempta-*

temptations, &c. Is not only becauſe the Subject leads not directly to it, but becauſe I have heretofore in 20. Sermons from *Rev.* 3. 10. handled that ſubject among you.

I had thought I might have continued with you long enough to have out-lived my deſign upon this Text; but the wiſe God (*in whoſe hands my times are*) hath given me a *quietus eſt*, not only in reference to my place, but to my conſcience alſo. Pſa. 31. 15.

The greateſt evill I ſhall wiſh to thoſe that ſucceed me, ſhall be, that they may be as true to the intereſt of your precious ſouls, as I did alwaies deſire, and to my power endeavour to be: *God is my record, that I ſought not yours, but you.* My care and prayer hath alwaies been, that you might receive *Heavenly treaſure* out of a *poor earthen veſſel.* 2 Cor. 1. 14.

I may ſay, that no part of Gods, *Vineyard* in the whole Nation hath had more choice and eminent laborers (my ſelf excepted) than this of *Stepney* for ſeveral years together; and in this regard I had a hard Province to right after ſuch Mr. *Burroughs*, M. *Whitaker*, M. *Bridge*, and till now Mr. *Greenhil*.

copies, but who looks for a Mans head upon a Childs ſhoulders; nor will God require the improvement of *ten talents* where he gives but *one*.

What good the Lord hath done by me, bleſs him for; ſet my name to no more than the weakneſs and infirmities that were diſcovered in my performances.

I have ground to hope that through the dew of Gods grace watering the ſeed of the Word, Ro. 10. 1. ſome were converted, ſome convinced, ſome confirmed; and *my* Heb. 13. 20, 21. *hearts deſire and prayer to God* for all, ſhall be *that they may be ſaved*.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

Matthew Meade.

TO

TO THE

Ingenuous Reader.

THis Sermon had never borrowed one hour of thy light, could prejudice and ill-will (which never ſpeaks well) have ſuffered it to have lain in darkneſs. It was honeſtly born, but unknown to the Parent, it was brought under a Canonical Baptiſm, where it received the ſign of the Croſs, and ſo is made Crucianus, though not Chriſtianus; had it but pleaded the holineſs of Veſtures, the decency of a Ceremony, no doubt though its ſubject had not been ſo good, yet its cenſure had not been ſo bad.

The Author intended no more in the delivering of it to his Hearers, than a

help to the delivering of them from the power of the Tempter. When ſhould the Watchmen give warning, but when the Enemy is approaching? and when ſhould they call loudeſt to ſpiritual watchfulneſs, *but when they are neareſt to the ſnares of* ſpiritual wickedneſs? *This was the practice of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.

What it was in the Sermon that could poſſibly offend, I cannot gueſs; unleſs the eighth Head; and I wonder not much at their offence at that, ſince it appears they are weak brethren. It is ſaid that men ſhould walk not as wiſe, but as fools, when the drift of the diſcourſe, was to teach them to walk not as fools, *but as* wiſe; *and that a Sermon of Temptation ſhould become a Temptation; thus is Chriſt*
1 Pet. 2. 8. *himſelf* a ſtone of ſtumbling, *whilſt they that ſo mannerly bow their bodies to the Name of Jeſus, cannot bend their conſciences at the truth of Jeſus, but herein is that Scripture fulfilled,* For Judgment I am come into this World, that they which ſee not
Joh. 9. 9. might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind. *There*

There is somewhat spoken about sinfull compliance with Ceremonies, and not much, if it had been more, it had not been much, coming from one that was born too late to remember them practised, and thinks he should live too long to see them imposed: If to speak against Will-worship and Superstition, *be a fault, (for that is my crime) who can love the Lord Jesus Christ in sinceaity, and at this time be innocent? I had rather be charged with frowardness before men, than to be charged with unfaithfulness before God.*

Expect not Iliads *in a nut-shell, much in this little, it being but concieved but the day before it was born: I resolve as not to diminish one sentence from it, to make it more excusable; so not to add one sentence to it, to make it more commendable; only a little in the introduction which I then omitted, and now to make what follows sence have added.*

It was seed sown on good ground, *Preached to an honest Congregation at* Stepney, *though* some fell by the way side, *and that the* wicked one picked Mat. 23. 4. compared with 9.

up: *Thus as bold thieves will dare to pick pockets at the very bar of judgement, ſo Satan will be tempting and enſnaring, even when and where his temptations are diſcovering.*

This Sermon hath a diſorderly publication, both in regard of divers Sermons that were preached before it on the ſame text, and divers that are to follow after it, but as this finds acceptance, ſo I at preſent purpoſe to deal with the reſt, either to the cloſet or the houſe top.

If any thing in it prove uſefull to thy ſoul in the hour of temptatiou, let God have thy praiſes, who deſerves them; and let him have thy prayers who needs them, and who promiſes to be in return for them,

Thy Servant for Jeſus ſake.

Mat. Meadt.

Ephes. 5. 15, 16.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise: Redeeming the time because the days are evil.

TO be good at all times is a Christians duty, but to be good in bad times is a Christians glory; to be a *Lot* in *Sodom*, a *Job* in the land of *Uz*, a Saint in *Nero's* house; *To be blameless and harmeless, the Sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked* Phil. 2. 15.

ed and perverſe Nation; this is the credit of a Chriſtian profeſſion. Bad times and bad manners too often corrupt good men: *Peter* was very zealous for Chriſt among the Diſciples, but when he had been but a while in the *High Prieſts Hall*, how doth he then deny Chriſt!

Joſeph had been but a while at Court, and he had learned the Court-Oath, to ſwear *by the life of Pharaoh*: The *Iſraelites* were no ſooner mingled with the Heathen, but they forth with bow and Sacrifice to their *Gods*: *they were mingled among the Heathen, and learned their works, and they ſerved their Idols*, Pſal. 106. 35. 36.

Juvenal. ——*Grex totus in agris*
Unius ſcabie cadit, et porrigine porci.

The Apoſtle engliſhes it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* Sin is of a very leavening
Deut. 7. nature, *A little leaven leaveneth the*
1. 2. 3. *whole lump*, Gal. 5. 9. And therefore it is that God commands *Iſrael*, at their entring into *Canaan*, utterly

to

to destroy all the Nations, to make no covenant, nor to marry with them; why? lest they should learn their manners and their customs.

And this was the reason of this Apostolical *Suada*, or Exhortation in the Text to the Chruch of *Ephesus*, *To walk circumspectly.*

This *Ephesus* was the Metropolis and chief City in *Asia Minor*: A City much given to superstition and Idolatry; there was the Temple of the great Goddess *Diana*, a City where the preaching and professing the Gospel was much persecuted; and therefore the Apostle *Paul* saith, *He fought with Beast at Ephesus.* Act. 15.27

Now what with Superstition among them, and persecution upon them, the days were very evil; and hence he gives them this counsel in the Text; *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise; redeeming the time because the days are evil* 1 Cor. 15. 31.

The words have in them four parts.

First, A great duty enjoyned, *See that ye walk circumspectly.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The injunction explained, *Not as fools but as wiſe.*
Thirdly, the explanation amplified, *Redeeming the time.*
Fourthly, The reaſon of all urged, *becauſe the daies are evil.*

The firſt general, *viz.* The injunction of a duty we have already ſpoken to, and are come to the ſecond General, *viz.*

The explanation of the injunction, which ſets out to us the manner of this circumſpect walking, and that both negatively and affirmatively.

Negatively, *Not as fools.*
Affirmatively, *But as wiſe.*

This Negative caution which the Apoſtle gives Chriſtians, *not to walk as fools*, doth imply in it this affirmative concluſion.

Doct. *That there are many Profeſſors of Religion are fools in their Profeſſion.*

This I have ſpoken to at large, and am now upon the explanation of the injunction, *as wiſe*, from whence

whence we lay down this Assertion,

That it is the Christians duty to walk wisely.

I have explained the term, *what it is to walk wisely.*

I have confirmed the Point, that it is the Christians duty.

I have given you the properties of this spiritual wisdom.

The fourth thing is to shew you, when this spiritual wisdom is in season.

Ans. At all times. Spiritual wisdom is never out of season. *Solomon* says, *there is a season to every thing, and a time to every purpose under Heaven.* Eccl. 1.1.

Yet there are two things he allots no time for, for sin, and for holiness: He doth not say there is a time to sin, because there is no time for that: he doth not say there is a time to serve God, and be holy, and wise to salvation, because all time is for that. Holiness and spiritual wisdom is always in season.

But yet there are four peculiar seasons of this walking wisely.

In

In times of outward proſperity.

In times of outward trouble and affliction.

In times of Temptation.

In times of ſpiritual deſertion.

Where the wiſdom of walking in proſperity lyeth, I have ſhewed you already in five things. Where the *wiſdom* of walking in affliction lyeth I have ſhewed you in twelve things.

Now in the third place, I ſhall ſhew you that it is the Chriſtians duty to walk wiſely in times of temptation. And then ſhew you wherein the wiſdom of walking in temptation lieth.

That it is the Chriſtians duty, to walk wiſely in the time of temptation. Chriſtian wiſdom is never more neceſſary than when we are aſſaulted by that cunning abverſary.

To clear this I ſhall lay down ſeven gradual concluſions.

1. *That the Saints of God are very incident to temptations from Satan;* theſe are the Buts the Devils ſhoots the arrows of his rage againſt. The Pyrat doth not aſſault the empty Ship, nor the Thief break open the poor mans Cottage; but where the prize

Prize is, there the onſet is.

Grace will keep us from ſinning in temptaton, but it will not keep us from ſuffering under temptation. Chriſt was made like to us, that eh he might be tempted, and we are tempted, that we may be made like to Chriſt.

The more a man is renewed and ſanctified, the more is he tryed and buffeted; the more God hath done for him, the more will Satan do againſt him; the more God increaſeth his grace, the more *S*atan diſturbeth his peace.

Nay immediately upon the greateſt diſcovery from God, the Saints have the ſoreſt batteries from Satan; when God dicovers moſt of his love to us, Satan will then diſcover moſt of his rage againſt us; if Chriſt doth but take us into the *Banqueting houſe*, Satan will preſently lead us into the Wilderneſs. Cant. 2. 4.

Paul was no ſooner come down out of the higheſt Heaven, but he is ſtraightway ſet upon by an enemy from the loweſt Hell. He had no ſooner received *abundance of Revelations*

lations to comfort him, but the next news is a *Messenger of Satan to buffet him*. After that glorious revelation he falleth into a grievous temptation, insomuch that the joy of his Spirit was much abated by the *thorn in the flesh*.

2 Cor. 12. 6. 7.

Thus it was with the Lord Christ himself, he no sooner heareth the voice of God from Heaven, saying, *This is my Beloved Son*, but immediately the spirit from Hell cometh and questioneth his Son-ship: he was no sooner gone up out of the water where he was baptized, but he is forthwith *led up into the wilderness to be tempted*.

Mat. 3. 16. compar. with Mat. 4. 1.

And if he did thus to the green tree, what will he not do in the dry? So that it is clear, that the Saints of God are very incident to temptations from Satan.

Secondly, *Man is very weak at best to withstand temptation, when it is least*. So long as God holdeth us up we cannot fall, but if God giveth us up, we cannot stand. It is mans weakness to presume upon his own strength, when as his best strength is but weakness.

Psal. 119. 117. and 17. 5.

Peter

Peter promiſes not to leave Chriſt, but when the temptation cometh, then he leaveth his promiſe. To perſiſt in duties of Sanctification, and to reſiſt in caſes of temptation, both theſe are mans works to do, but we muſt have Gods ſtrength to do them. Joh. 16.5. How vain is man to think himſelf any thing, when *without Chriſt he can do nothing?*

Thirdly, *We have in our natures much for temptation to work upon.* Our corrupt hearts are like Tinder, apt to take when the Devil ſtriketh fire. He that promiſeth himſelf that the frame of his heart will be the ſame under a temptation as it was before, may as well promiſe himſelf that though he fall into the water, he ſhall be dry, becauſe while he was upon the ſhore he was not wet.

It is not with Chriſtians as it was with Chriſt. When Satan came to tempt him, he found nothing in him, no carnal principles, no ſecret luſt, no corrupt matter to faſten his temptations upon. *The Prince of this World cometh and hath nothing in me,* Joh. 14. 20.

But

But it is otherwise with Christians: Satan hath for the compassing his ends a sure party in our own bosom: When Satan beleagureth us without, sin is ready to betray us within. *A mans enemies are they of his own house.*

Christ had only the suffering part of temptation when he entred into it, but we have also the sinning part of it. Though when Satan came to Christ, he found nothing in him; yet when he comes to Christians, he finds much in them.

Though believers are not in sin, yet there is sin in believers; much Inst remaineth in the best. Where grace is it destroyeth sins power, but it doth not destroy its presence. Though we are sanctified in every part, yet *we are sanctified but in part.* Though *Regeneration* taketh much sin out of us, yet *Temptation* findeth much sin still in us. There is much for temptation to work upon and therefore we had need to walk wisely in temptotion.

1 Cor. 13. 10.

Fourthly, *Satan with great cunning suiteth his temptations to mans*

nature

nature and diſpoſition; as he hath great malice, as being a Devil, ſo he hath great knowledge, as being an Angel; and as his knowledge is great by intelligence, ſo it is heightned by experience. For he hath been trading with ſouls, well nigh ſix thouſand years. He doth not love to ſail againſt the Wind, nor row againſt the tyde; he ſuits the temptation without us, to the luſts and corruptions within us, and ſo hath Wind and Tyde with him. If he meet with *Peter*, he dealeth with his carnal fear, with *Davids* luſt, with *Jonahs* paſſion, with *Dietrephes* his ambition.

Oh how wiſely doth it behove us to walk in temptation!

Fifthly, *As all Saints are tempted to commit ſin, ſo many commit the ſin to which they are tempted:* As Satan is alwaies very treacherous, ſo he is often very proſperous. He cannot make us fall finally, but he maketh us fall frequently: He doth often *bruiſe our heel*, though he cannot *break our head*. He bloweth the coal of luſt in *David*, and how quickly doth

doth it flame in Adultery and Murder! Though Satan cannot break our backs, yet he may break our bones, and ſend us halting to our Graves; and therefore we had need walk wiſely in temptation.

Sixthly, *A man may withſtand a temptation at one time, and yet fall under the ſame temptation at another:* For the influences of grace may be more at one time, and leſs at another. A mans own heart may be in a watchful frame at one time, and in a ſleepy, carnal frame at another; and Satan then comes ſooneſt when the heart is ſecureſt. It is the believers duty to watch always, but the believer is not always in that duty.

Mark 13. 37.

Now if Satan cometh once and findeth him watching, he will go and come again when he may find him ſleeping.

Satan is not for ever conquered, becauſe he is once reſiſted. What he faileth in at one time, he attempteth at another. When he left Chriſt, it was with an intent to come again, Luk. 4. 13. *When the Devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him*

him, for how long ? *for a ſeaſon*; ἄχρι καιροῦ, untill another opportunity : for he ſet upon him again, *Joh.* 14. 30.

We ſhall never be out of Satan's reach, till we come into the boſom of Jeſus Chriſt.

As Chriſt ſometimes leaveth us, and then returneth again; ſo doth Satan. *Chriſt* leaveth us, to make us act grace, and walk more ſtrictly; *Satan* leaveth us, to make us lay aſide grace, and walk more remiſly.

When Chriſt departs, we are apt to be caſt down, and to ſay we ſhall never ſee comfort. When *Satan* departs, we are apt to be lifted up and to ſay, We ſhall never ſee trouble. When as both withdraw, to return again, Chriſt withdraws that he may return with the greater mercy, and Satan withdraws that he may return with the greater fury.

7. *In every temptation the ſoul runs a great hazard of eternal deſtruction:* The deſign of the Tempter is the ruine of the Believer : As the deſign of Chriſt in Regeneration is to ſave the ſoul; ſo the deſign of Satan in tempta-

temptation is to destroy it! Our blessed Redeemer would fain make us as happy as himself in Heaven, and this cursed tempter would fain make us as miserable as himself in Hell. *He* Jude v. 6. *that kept not his own station*, grudgeth us ours. It is matter of his envy that we should possess that *habitation* which he so sinfully left; and therefore his *work on earth* is to hinder us in our working *for Heaven*. He envieth us everlasting *crowns of righteousness*, when he himself lieth in *everlasting chains of darkness*; and therefore he would fain defile us here, that so he might destroy us for ever.

Surely therefore *if at all times, a Christian therefore should walk wisely, then in times of Temptation more especially.*

Query, *But you will say, where lyeth the wisdom of walking in a time of temptation? Suppose I am much exercis'd with temptations of several kinds, wherein doth the wisdom of walking consist at such a time?*

I shall answer the question in thirteen particulars.

1. *In*

1. *In ſubmitting to the will of God in temptation.* There is no temptation befalls us but it is according to the Will of God: God willeth our trials, that he may try our wills, whether they will bow to his will or no: A Chriſtian ſhould ſay, *the Will of the Lord be done*, though he be undone; much more he ſhould be contented when it is the Will of God he ſhould be tried. Acts 21. 14.

God ordereth and diſpoſeth, and timeth all our temptations. Satan cannot do what he pleaſeth but what God pleaſeth.

He had not power to touch *Job* till God gave him leave; and when he had power he could go no farther than the wiſe God gave him order. In temptation 'tis not what Satan will, but what God will. Job. 1. 12.

Yet how frowardly do many of the Children of God carry themſelves in temptation, ſpeaking hardly of God, as if he had forſook them, becauſe he ſuffers Satan to buffet them?

Now then, if I ſubmit to the will of God in temptation, and ſay, although I could rejoyce to be rid of

this temptation, yet it is not fit I should chuse my condition, then I walk wisely in temptation.

2. *In disclaiming self confidence, and not trusting in our own strength.* Self-confidence usually meeteth with some sad miscarriage for its recompence. Satan desires no greater advantage against us, than to find us in our own strength, when he cometh to assault us. *Solomon* saith, *He that trusts in his own heart is a fool*; Why a fool? because he is sure to be deceived. So foolish was *Peter*; *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I.* What? deny my Master the Son of God, my Redeemer! What deny the blessed Jesus? *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God*; and therefore *though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*; and yet who forsook Christ so sadly as *Peter?* he doth not only forsake him, but forswear him.

Prov. 28. 26.

Mat. 26. 33.

Mat. 16. 6. & 26. 24.

The strength of a believer lieth not in himself but in his Saviour; God can overcome Satan without our hands, but we cannot so much as defend our selves without his arm

arm: He can do all things without us, we can do nothing without him. *He is the ſtrength of Iſrael.* 1 Sam. 1. 29.

And therefore when the Apoſtle layeth down directions for the withſtanding temptations, he giveth this as his firſt counſel, *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Eph. 6. 1. Gods power is greater to help us, than Satans is to hurt us: As without Gods leave he cannot tempt us; ſo when he doth tempt, God will not leave us; when Satan doth his worſt to throw us down, God will do his beſt to make us, ſtand. *As we are kept by the power of God, to ſalvation,* 1 Pet. 5. 10 ſo we are kept by the power of God from temptation.

Now then, if in temptation I diſclaim ſelf-confidences and reſt upon divine omnipotence, if I ceaſe from my own ſtrength and rely upon the ſtrength of God, *then do I walk wiſely in temptation.*

3. *In diſtinguiſhing between temptations from God and Satan.* Sometimes God tempteth, and ſometimes Satan; God temtpeth for good ends, Satan for evil ends, God tempteth to

try grace, *Deut.* 13. 3. *The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart.*

Thus it is said, *God tempted Abraham*, Gen. 22. 1. It was to try his faith and obedience.

Thus he tempteth *Hezekiah*, 2 Chr. 32. 31. *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*

But Satan tempteth to destroy grace, not to try it.

As the design of temptation is the ruin of grace, so God is said *to tempt no man.* Jam. 1. 13.

But as the design of temptation is the tryal of grace, so God tempteth every man. God tempteth for probation, Satan for reprobation; God when he tempteth, cometh with his fan, to fan out the chaff and rubbish, but to keep in and preserve the wheat; but Satan when he tempteth, cometh with his sieve, to let out the wheat, but to keep in the rubbish: The fan casteth out the worst and keepeth in the best; but the sieve keepeth in the worst, and casteth out the best. So God by his temptations purgeth

1 Pet. 1. 6. 7.

Mat. 7. 12.

Luke 22. 31.

purgeth corruption out of us, and nouriſheth grace in us: But Satan by his temptations laboureth to confirm ſin, and weaken grace.

God tempteth becauſe he would have us ſtand, Satan tempteth to make us fall: God tempteth to purge our ſin, that when Satan tempteth he may not take advantage againſt us by our ſin; God tempteth to cleanſe corruption out of us, that ſo when Satan cometh he may find nothing in us; God tempteth us becauſe he loveth us; Satan tempteth becauſe he hateth us: God tempteth to make us like Chriſt; Satan tempteth to make us leave Chriſt.

Now then if I diſtinguiſh aright between temptations from God, and temptations from Satan; between thoſe that are only to try grace; and thoſe that are to deſtroy grace; that I may improve the former, and reſiſt the latter, *then do I walk wiſely in temptation.*

4. *It is wiſdom not to bring our own reaſon to the temptation; but to bring the temptation to the blood of Chriſt.* Vain man thinketh in the ſtrength of

his own reason to out-argue the tempter; this is to shoot with Satan in his own Bow. To argue with him is, as the Proverb hath it, *To light a Candle to the Devil.*

Yet how ready are we to parley with him! When he knocks at the door; how apt are we to look out at the Window!

Eve ventureth to treat with him about the forbidden fruit, and from treating she falls to eating, to the ruin of a *whole World at once. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his cloaths* Prov. 6. 27.28. *not be burnt? Can he go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?*

Reason is but a carnal weapon, but our enemy is spiritual; and therefore *the weapons of our warfare must not be* Eph.6.12. *carnal*, he must be spiritually subdued: The blood of Christ can 2 Cor,10. 1. quench temptation, Reason cannot. Satan saith to carnal Reason, as the evil spirit did to *Seva's* sons, *Jesus* Act. 19. *I know, and Paul I know, but who are* 13.15.16. *you? and it leaped upon them, and overcame them.*

Bring Reason to a temptation, and it beareth down that; but bring a temp-

temptation to the blood of Chriſt, and it cannot ſtand before that.

Now then, if I oppoſe not temptations by my own Reaſon, but bring them to the Blood of Chriſt to extinguiſh them then I walk wiſely in temptation.

5. *It is wiſdom to lay in proviſion in time of temptation*; To ſtore the heart with ſomewhat that may keep temptation out. There is Goſpel proviſion, which if laid up in the heart, will keep out all temptation, from entring to hurt; and that is the *ſence of the love of God in Chriſt*. Though we be under temptation, yet this will keep us from entring into temptation. Mat. 16. 41.

Senſe of the love of God in Chriſt doth conſtrain grace, and reſtrain ſin; it ſtrengthens the new man, and weakens the old; and there temptation never proſpereth; where grace flouriſheth, and ſin withereth.

Now then, if I lay in ſuitable proviſion in time of temptation, that may be a help to preſerve me when Satan doth aſſault me, then I walk wiſely in temptation.

6. *The Wisdom of walking in temptation lieth in fighting Satan with Scripture weapons.* There is not a temptation of Satan which the Word doth not arm you against.

It's storied that a certain Jew should have poysoned *Luther*, but was prevented by his picture which was sent to *Luther* with a warning from a faithful friend, that he should take heed of such a man when he saw him, by which means *Luther* knew the Murderer, and prevented the design.

The Scripture doth not only warn us, and shew us the face of those lusts which Satan worketh by to destroy us, but it armeth us against them: Satan is never so worsted as when Scripture weapons are used: Those shafts strike Satan to the quick that are taken out of Gods quiver. *David* with stones out of the Brook slays *Goliab*, that enemy of *Israel*, so with stones out of the Brook of Scripture, may we conquer this enemy of God and souls.

1 Sam. 17. 10, 49.

When the Lord Christ was forty days together combating with Satan, he useth only Scripture Arguments.

Luke 3. 2.

When

When he tempts him to turn ſtones into Bread, Chriſt anſwers him with Scripture, *It is written, man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, Mat. 4. 4.

When he tempts him to caſt himſelf down from the Pinacle of the Temple, Chriſt urgeth Scripture again. *It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*; ver. 7.

And ſo when he tempteth him to worſhip him, ſtill Chriſt oppoſeth Scripture to the Tempter, *It is written, thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, & him only ſhalt thou ſerve*, v. 10.

Thus the Lord Chriſt fetcheth arguments out of Scripture, and with theſe puts to flight the Tempter.

The word of God hath a power in it to quaſh all Satans temptations; do but oppoſe his aſſaults with Scripture commands, and he will never be abe to ſtand. And therefore the Apoſtle giveth good advice in this very caſe of oppoſing Satan, *Eph.* 6. 7. *Take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

So that if in temptations I oppoſe

Satan with Scripture weapons, if I urge Scripture injunctions againſt the Serpents ſuggeſtions, and ſo ſet Gods wiſdom againſt Satans cunning, *then I walk wiſely in temptation.*

7. *It is wiſdom to look upon temptation as broken and overcome in Chriſt, and to conſider Satan as a conquered enemy*: This will not make us the leſs careful, but the leſs fearful: All the temptations that befall the people of God, are already overcome in Chriſt; *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil*, 1 Joh. 3.5.

The Lord Chriſt was a common perſon, and that not only in his death, but in his life. Chriſt was not born for himſelf, but for us; *to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given.* Iſa. 9. 6. He did not obey for himſelf but for us; *By the obedience of one, ſhall many be made righteous.* Ro. 4. 19 He did not die and ſuffer for himſelf, but for us; *He was made a curſe for us.* Gal. 3. 13

Whatever evil Chriſt did undergo, he underwent it for us, he was tempted for us, he broke Satans head for us. As when *Adam* was tempted,

in

in being a common perſon, we were all tempted in him, and he falling in the temptation, we fell in him. *Omnes eramus ille unus homo.* So when the Lord Chriſt lived in the world, and was tempted by Satan, we were tempted in him, and when he conquered, we conquered in him; *ſo that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*, Rom. 8. 37. Satan now through the victory of the Croſs is a conquered enemy. He fights againſt the members of Chriſt with broken weapons; for the Captain of our ſalvation *hath ſpoyled Principalities and powers.* Col. 2. 15.

So that if I look upon temptation as broken, and Satans power as ſpoiled and overcome by the Death and Croſs of Chriſt, *then I walk wiſely in temptation.*

8 *If the temptation travel with a dilemma or difficulty on each hand, and the Chriſtian chuſeth that part of the dilemma that is for the glory of God, though grievous to the fleſh, rather than that part that is profitable and gratifying to the fleſh, but tending to the diſhonour of God, then he walks wiſely.*

Some

Sometimes the people of God are brought to ſuch ſtraights by temptation, that either they muſt ſin much to avoid ſuffering, or ſuffer much to avoid ſinning: Their own carnal advantage and outward ſafety lyeth through ſin, but the glory of God lieth through ſuffering.

Such a Dilemma was that which the *three Children* were brought into by temptation, *Dan.* 3. 11. They muſt either turn or burn; they muſt bow to the Image the King had ſet up, or burn in the Furnace he had cauſed to be heated.

If they worſhipped the Image, they ſhould obey the Kings Command, but then they broke the command of God; if they did not worſhip, they ſhould provoke the Kings diſpleaſure, but then they kept in Gods favour: If they did worſhip, they diſhonoured the God of *Sion*; if they did not worſhip they provoked the King of *Babylon*.

Here is the dilemma; now ſee how wiſely they chuſe, verſ. 17. 18. *If it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and*

he

he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King: but if not, be it known unto thee O King, we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor worſhip the Image which thou haſt ſet up.

What a choice Spirit is this? not found in every houſe where the profeſſion of Religion is hanged out at the door. How many in this hour of temptation are caught in this inſnaring trial? what ſay ſome? come let us rather conform to the ceremonies, than loſe our liberties; rather let us bow at the name of Jeſus, than loſe all for the ſake of Jeſus; it is better to baptize with the Croſs, than to bear the Croſs; and to wear a Surplice, than to pinch our carcaſs.

Thus many (it is to be feared) deſtroy their conſciences, to keep their places, and conform againſt their judgments, to preſerve their profits; this is as if a man to ſave his hat ſhould loſe his head, or as if a man ſhould ſink the ſhip to avoid the ſtorm. Alaſs poor ſouls how are they fallen in the hour of temptation!

Suppoſe a man was put to this, either he muſt ſwear Canonical obedience

dience, or he muſt be put to ſilence, either he muſt proſtitute the ſeals to all, or he muſt Preach to none, either he muſt rake up the ceremonies, or lay down the Miniſtry; This would be a great temptation, Which part ought a man to chuſe in this caſe?

Why, you will ſay, It is pity but ſuch a man ſhould preach; I but it is greater pity that he ſhould ſin; you will ſay he may do much good in his Miniſtry would he but conform. I but he *muſt not do evil that good may come on it.* If I ſuffer for conſcience ſake, God is honoured; but if I ſin for Gods ſake, he is diſhonoured; *for my lie cannot advance his glory* and therefore the reſolution of the three children is a good pattern, *we will not worſhip the image thou haſt ſet up.*

Rom. 3. 7.

and 3. 7.

So that if when temptation brings me under a dilemma, I chuſe that part of the dilemma which is for Gods glory, though for my loſs, rather than that part which is to Gods diſhonour and my gain, *then I walk wiſely in temptation.*

5. *Wiſdom lies in a diligent endeavour*

vour to improve grace by temptation. As the *Iſraelites* were multiplied by being oppreſſed; it is ſaid, *The more they were afflicted the more they grew*; ſo a true *Iſraelite* the more he is tempted, the more is his grace increaſed. As trees are the deeper rooted by the wind that moſt ſhakes them, ſo believers are moſt ſtrengthned by the temptations that moſt try them. Exo. 1. 12

Temptation is the Devils bellows which he brings to blow out the ſpark of that Heavenly fire that is in us; but as the breath of the bellows makes the fire flame the more, ſo the blaſts of temptation make grace increaſe the more. God hath an overrulinghand over temptations, and he turns them to good when Satan intends them for hurt, and makes grace proſper by that very means, whereby Satan hopes to make it wither. Thus can God out-ſhoot Satan in his own Bow.

So then, *If I labour to grow in grace in time of temptation, if I turn a tempting ſeaſon into a growing ſeaſon, then I walk wiſely in temptation*

10. *It*

10. *It is wiſdom in temptation to uſe no indirect means for riddance, but to reſt upon the promiſe for deliverance.* There is no temptation that can befall us, but God hath made a ſuitable promiſe to relieve us? that ſo we might not ſinfully deliver our ſelves, but patiently reſt on him for deliverance. He hath promiſed to *tread Satan under our feet, to bind the ſtrong man. Not to ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able but to make a way for us to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.* O that Chriſtians world ſtudy the promiſe, and converſe much with the promiſe in time of temptation! God hath promiſed never to forſake us, and therefore never let us forſake the promiſe. There are three things very remarkable in every promiſe. 1. The *faithfulneſs of the Father who gives it.* 2. The *grace of the Son, which is the matter of it.* 3. The *power of the Spirit which accompliſheth it.* The faithfulneſs of the Father who makes the promiſe good to us. The grace of the Son makes the promiſe ſweet to us. The efficacy of the ſpirit makes the pro-

Rom. 16. 10.

1 Cor. 13 15.

Heb. 13. 5 *Owen*

promiſe good in us. So that the promiſe is a ſure reſting place for a tempted ſoul. Now then, if in temptation I uſe no indirect means for riddance, but reſt upon the promiſe for deliverance *then do I walk wiſely in temptation.*

11 *The wiſdom of walking in temptation lieth in not yielding to temptation.* Temptation from Satan is our ſuffering, but it is from our ſelves if it becomes our ſin: The Devil may flatter us, but he cannot force us: He may provoke, but without our conſent he cannot prevail: He may tempt us unto ſin, but he cannot tempt us into ſin: He could never come into the houſe if we did not open the door: *Every man is tempted*; When? when he is aſſaulted? no, but *when he is drawn away of his own luſt and incited.* The true procreating cauſe of ſin is in every mans ſoul; Satan is the Father of temptation, but the heart is the Mother of ſin. Suggeſtion without could do nothing, were it not for corruption within; it is not *calliditas diaboli decipientis*, but *voluntas*

Jam. 1. 1.

Aug. de pec. orig. l. 2. cap. 37

luntas homines consentientis, outwardcraft could do nothing without inward lust. Satan wooes our wills, but we will our own woes. τὸ πῦρ παρ' ἡμῶν ἡ φλὸξ τοῦ πνεύματος the fire is in our wood, though it be the Devils flame; we may do the Devil wrong (as bad as he is) to lay all our sins at his door, as though we were innocent; for though the Bastard be gotten by him, it is conceived and brought forth by us. This is an old trick, as old as *Adam*: when God asketh him, *Hast thou eaten of the tree I for bad the?* mark how he shifteth it off; *The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat.* And when God comes to the Woman and asketh, *What is this that thou hast done?* saith she, *the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* *Adam* shifteth the fault from himself to the woman, and she from her self to the Serpent. But had not they been willing what could the Serpent have done? if we are tempted, it is Satans fault; but if we yield, it is our guilt. *Sceva* at the siege of *Dyrrachium* so long alone resisted

Gen. 3.11 12, 13.

resisted *Pompeys* Army, that he had two hundred and twenty darts sticking in his shield, and lost one of his eyes, and yet gave not over till *Cæsar* came into his rescue. Under the Law if a man meet a Damsel and ly with her, if she consented thereto she died, but if she cried out she was innocent and acquitted. So if when Satan assaults us, he obtains consent from us, we die, *for sin when it is finished, brings forth death*; But if we consent not, but cry out to Christ for help against temptation, we shall be delivered. So that if I stand out and yield not when temptation comes, if I consent not to the sin the temptation leads to, if though Satan perswades, yet he prevails not, *then I walk wisely in temptation.*

Deut. 21. 23. to 28.

Jam. 1.15

12. *The Wisdom of walking in temptation, lieth in praying much, when we are tempted much*; this is the Lord Christs own counsel, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*

Mat. 26. 41.

Prayer is faiths recourse to the fountain of strength, to fetch help and succour against the Tempter; in praying much, when we are tempted much,

much, we counter-work Satan in his deſign; for one of his great deſigns in temptation, is, to ſtop the ſtream of prayer. Chriſt ſhould be moſt ſought when we are moſt aſſaulted. *Paul* had a ſtrong temptation, and he made ſtrong ſupplication. The *thorn in his fleſh* cauſed the groans of his ſpirit: *The meſſenger of Satan coming to buffet him*, made him ſend many a meſſage to Chriſt to come & ſupport him. *For this I beſought the Lord thrice*, (that is often) *that it might depart from me.* When Satan doth his worſt in tempting, a Chriſtian ſhould do his beſt in praying. There are four things eſpecially which ſhould be the matter of our Prayer in temptation. Pray that our grace may be above our tryal. Pray that temptation may be firſt ſanctified to us, then removed from us. Pray that though we ſuffer by temptation yet we may not ſin in temptation, *deliver us from evil.* Pray that Chriſt would not be ſo far from us, when Satan is ſo near to us; that when we are under the greatneſs of Satans malice, we may be under the experience

2 Cor. 12. 1, 8.

ence of Christs prmise, who hath said, *my grace is sufficient for thee.* 2 Cor. 12. 2.
Faiths diligence for preparation, in the hour of the souls temptation, lies much in supplication; Satan may tempt us, but if he find a praying frame of heart, he cannot hurt us. I have heard of a malicious woman, who gave her self to the devil, provided that he would do a mischief to such a neighbour, whom she mortally hated; the devil went once and again to do his errand, but at last returns & tels her he could do no hurt to that man, for when ever de came, he found him either reading the Scriptures or praying. There is no voice God loves better, or that Satan likes worse than the voice of prayer. One of the Fathers call it *Diaboli flagellum*, the devils whip to torment him; and the Apostle when he wold teach us to stand against Satan, bids us pray alwaies. He Eph. 5. 18
that prayeth much is seldom taken in sin, but he is never taken with sin; he seldom acts it, but he never likes it. now if temptation doth not make me lay aside duty, if I turn times of temptation into times of supplication,

if

if when I am in greateſt danger I run to Chriſt for help and ſuccor, *then do I walk wiſely in temptation.*

13. *It is wiſdom when Satan is tempting, for us to be believing*; all the Chriſtians ſtrength and comfort is fetched without doors, and he hath none to ſend of his errand but faith. In temptation thy work is to believe, and then God will do the reſt.

Pſal. 56. 2. Therefore ſaith *David, At what time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee*, he tells God he will make bold to ſtep into his houſe, when taken in a ſtorm, and doth not queſtion his welcome. It is one means of preſervation to believe that God will preſerve us. As the duty that Satan hates moſt, is the duty of praying; ſo the grace that Satan oppoſes moſt, is the grace of believing; all his temptations are levelled at the ruine of Faith. He may tempt thee to ſins againſt the law, to uncleanneſs, unjuſtice, &c but this is not his ultimate end, his great deſign lieth againſt thy intereſt in the Goſpel. What ever ſin he temps thee to, his aim is not only to draw thee to commit

commit that ſin, but to ruin thy faith, and ſo rob thee of all good and benefit by Jeſus Chriſt. This was his deſign in ſifting *Peter*; and this the Lord Chriſt foreſaw, and therefore tells *Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* And hence it is that the Apoſtle exhorteth us, *Above all to take the ſhield of faith, wherewith we ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Every grace is of uſe in this combate; but faith is above all. *This is the victory that overcomes, even our Faith.* Faith hath two hands, a receiving hand and a working hand, and the receiving hand relieveth the working hand; the receiving hand fetcheth in from Chriſt, the working hand improveth it for Chriſt, In temptation the receiving hand fetcheth in ſtrength and ſuccour, and the working hand uſeth this ſtrength whereby we conquer. Could we but believe, Satan could never hurt us; for then in our greateſt conflicts the Lord Chriſt would help us. There are eight things we ſhould exerciſe our Faith upon in temptations. 1. Believe the great

Luk. 22. 32.
Eph. 6. 16
1 Joh. 5. 4.

efficacy

efficacy of the blood and Cross of Christ to quench temptations. 2. Believe that thou hast interest in all the fulness & merits of Christ, & say when thou art in temptation,
1 Cor. 1. 30. *Christ is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* 3. Believe that when thou art in Satans hands, Satan is then in Gods hands. 4. Believe that the promises run with the *sweetest streams*, when Satan raiseth the *greatest storms*. 5. Believe what spiritual assistance there is at hand to help and encourage us in the combate; the love of God the grace of Christ, the power of the Spirit, and besides all this, the good Angels guard us by
Psal. 4. 7. Heb. 1. 14. *commission*, when the bad Angels molest us by Gods *permission*. 6. Believe that the L. Christ
Heb. 2. 19. and 1, 15. hath learn'd to have compassion, by his own
Luk. 3. 32. trial in the day of his humilation. 7. Believe
Joh. 17. 15 that while we are conflicting on earth with the tempter, Christ is interceeding for us in
Rev. 2. 26. and 3, 12. heaven with the Father. 8. Believe the glorious recompences that are appointed for all such as overcome when they are tempted. *To him that overcomes, will give to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcome & am set down with my father on his throne*, Rev. 3. 21. *Be thou faithful unto death, & I will give thee a crown of life*, Rev. 2. 10. Now then if when I am tempted much, I trust much; I turn times of temptation into times of believing, *then do I walk wisely in temptation.* And thus I have done with this third season of walking wisely, *and that is in time of temptation.*

Jam. 1. 5, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *Now the Lord help you and me to pray for, and seek after this spiritual wisdom, that we may be fortified against temptation, and so made wise to salvation.*

FINIS.

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